

My dear Mrs. Chapman.

Welcome home to the green fields and blue hills of New England; welcome home to your place in the Anti Slavery ranks; welcome once more to the jers and scoffs of the negro-hater; welcome to the toils and self-denial of the Abolitionist; and welcome, yes, thrice welcome, to the reward which is in store for the pioneers in this sacred cause, the final triumph; and welcome to the crown of glory in the bright world above, which awaits the faithful laborer in the cause of man's redemption.

Although a feeble instrument, yet wielded by the powerful arm of the Lord Almighty, I find I can accomplish something, and I have been trying during the past summer, to labor for the oppressed and degraded colored man.

In the course of months several incidents have occurred, which I think may be interesting to you and the other Anti Slavery friends in Boston. I returned from the South-West, nearly two years ago, hating Slavery, for its influence on the white people & society in general, but esteeming the Abolitionists a fanatical, mistaken people. Deeply interested in the subject, I read every Anti Slavery publication within my reach, and gradually became convinced, as all will be who are willing to receive the light. Love for my southern friends, and fear of their disapprobation, long kept me from openly avowing my changed sentiments, which at length conscience compelled me to do, first by letters to them, then by letters and pieces in Anti Slavery papers, and by arguments with all people as I had opportunity.

I now longed to hear for myself some of our north Abolitionists, and satisfy my mind that the tales respecting their bitter spirit, the scandalous & harsh names they uttered, were false, as in my heart I believed them to be. I succeeded in attending the Springfield Convention, and was won by the entire fervour, the loving spirit, and the sincerity, manifested there, and I may add convinced that they told truths, solemn truths which the people call falsehoods because they wish they were false. I felt from my heart that I was with them in spirit, and haste God speed, to the heroic & self-denying Abby Kelly, and the amiable and useful Sarah Southwick, whose labors, though less public, were none the less needed. From that time I longed to join the Abolitionists in their labor of love, but the struggle between my duty and my fears was long and severe, and might never have ended, had not circumstances decided it. It would be useless for me to say now, as formerly, at the end of a long argument against Slavery, "but I am not an Abolitionist." Full of feeling, and ever ready to speak as I felt, the opposition I met with in uttering my half-formed sentiments, only strengthened them in to decided opinions. When speaking of the sufferings of the poor slave, it was often cast in my teeth, "why do you not look after the colored people right here in Springfield? why care for the poor slave, so far from us; when those in our town are in so much worse case?" Exited by the frequency of this remark, I determined to go and visit them, and try what a Sunday School could do for them, and only waited for the melting of the winter snows to put my resolve in execution.

The little hamlet where they congregate is called Glayth, not like Glayth where you have been, the land of the noble free, where brave and generous spirits welcome the distressed of every clime; but where reigns poverty, wretchedness & sin in every form, but especially Intemperance. While maturing my plans, I fell in company with a congenial spirit, whose heart was set on the same object, and who had actually visited them. Fired with new zeal, each encouraged by the other, we commenced, and God

has crowned our exertions thus far, with signal success. They who have never visited the abodes of want and wickedness, who have only been accustomed to the luxuries of wealth and refinement, cannot conceive of the misery we there have seen. In one house were five children, with only a few rags to cover them, on a cold frosty morning vainly endeavoring to kindle a few green bushes into a flame, while their abjecting parents were frolicking with their comrades, pretending to be making baskets, which when finished they sell for rum, and be drunk a week, ~~then~~ ~~they were not by any means~~. He begged the mother to go to her children, "I'll risk their freezing, it's not freezing weather," said the wretch. Some of them said they were the children of the Devil, and we felt not disposed to dispute their parentage; he is a cruel father if their rags and filth can speak for him.

In one house were a stupid old man and woman and a little girl, their vacant countenances reminded me of the southern slave, a thin filthy hovel strengthened the reminiscence; dirty dishes & old bones of meat, candles and provision huddled together in confusion, on a dirty table, the floor appearing as if it had never been swept or washed seemed the very counterpart of a southern kitchen. In other houses we found clean, tidily dressed women and children, and comfortable accommodations, though small and mean compared with the more favored portion of the human race, white people. But did I find what I had been told of, those who were worse off than the slaves? No, worse than slavery cannot exist on earth, mean and degraded as are the colored people here, they nevertheless own themselves; they are not compelled to have their children to freeze; they are not subject to another's will; they can go and come when they please; when they work, they have their wages, and can do what they please with them; and oh, the blessed Bible is open to them, if they will, they can learn to read it, they fear no master's lash. I have said the slaves were stupid, those who have seen the fugitives here, may question the truth of my assertion, but they must remember when the fugitive arrives here he is no longer a slave, he is a man, he has thrown off the shackles that fetter body & mind, he stands erect, unshackled by the consciousness that he has, under God, secured his own freedom.

On the first Sabbath in May, a bright beautiful morning, my sister & myself set out to spend the day at Hayti. Our route at first lay through a little wooded copse, the fragrance of Spring was breathed around, and as we stopped now and then to cull a wild flower, and admire the works of God, our hearts shared in the general joy of all nature. The season had been uncommonly backward, as all New England will remember, and the green leaves were just springing forth in their freshness and beauty, the long rains had ceased, and we realized the truth of God's promise, that seed time and harvest, summer and winter should never fail. Others had labored where we were going, and pronounced the field incapable of cultivation, even the most philanthropic had become discouraged; all to whom we had told our plans, had wished us success, while they predicted our failure. But three or four we had found, who with living faith and energy, with warm hearts & willing minds, were ready to lay hold of this holy work.

When we arrived we found our young friend L. there before us. My sister, with her, went to visit some families, and while they are gone I will introduce you to Bro. Smith, as he is hereafter to make quite a figure in the story. He is a bright mulatto, a little lame, very agreeable in his appearance, and

intelligent in his conversation; he is a licensed preacher of the Methodist church, has been at Milbraham school; he was formerly the slave of a planter in Maryland, but had succeeded through many perils in effecting his escape to Massachusetts. It would have melted any heart but a pro-slavery one, to have heard his simple and feeling description, of his feelings when he first saw an Abolitionist. That a white man should feel for him, and care for him, how strange! he had supposed all white men his enemies. During the winter he had been lecturing in Connecticut, in company with ~~Mr.~~ P. D. Hudson, a distinguished friend of the slave. His intelligence and refinement were a loud and irresistible proof of the capacity of the negro's intellect. But the hour for school has arrived, people are collecting, and we have not half finished our conversation. So Mrs. L — was invited to come and spend an evening with us.

My sister and I were teaching a school of young ladies, and boarded ourselves, we hired rooms of a respectable family, the man was a member of the Baptist church, and his wife of the Methodist. The expected evening arrived, we had invited a white gentleman of our acquaintance, who did not come. Deeply interested in Bro. L —'s conversation, and in the narratives he gave of slaves escaping, (for I had never before talked with a slave of a slave's feelings, that being, at the south, considered prima facie evidence of being an "abolition incendiary") in reading letters from slaveholders, and from our brother Shraw Wilson, the time passed rapidly away, and the clock struck the hour of ten, ere we were aware of it; alarmed at the lateness of the hour, he hastily bade us good evening.

A few words passed on the subject with Mrs — the next day, by which we learned that our visitor had been seen, and that he was known to be black. My sister also mentioned to me, that Mr — must have a strong prejudice against color, for though very much attached to his own sect, he had given up his few in church, because a colored man had taken the one behind it. The day after this, I was sent for, and informed that I must leave the house as soon as I could obtain rooms elsewhere, and the scholars must "take their books, and go home" the next time they came, for the school should not be in his house another day. Some paltry mischief they had done was alleged as the reason, whereupon I offered to pay the damage, but said I could not leave, as I knew not where to get other rooms, a removal would be attended with much trouble and expense, and the people as well as myself expected me to remain there as I had hired the house.

He said, I had "no writing" to show that I had hired the house, and if I would not go by "fair means", he "would try what foul means could do"; he should not have the school in his house another day; as to "having his house a rendezvous for blacks", he would not; neither would he have "young ladies in his house who kept company with blacks"; and he "guessed" I should not be troubled with many scholars, he had heard one Abolitionist say his daughter should not come again.

I replied, that "no Abolitionist could object to the gentleman who came here", he was "well educated, intelligent and a preacher"; that "he had spent tea at Dr. C's (the Congregational minister) at Dr. C's (a respectable physician) spent evenings with others, and would be received by any family". He said "they were great Abolitionists", he knew nothing about Abolition, and wanted to know nothing about it, but he "would have none of it near him", neither would he have any persons in his house, who went to blacks' houses, or "had blacks visit them, and stay till midnight".

I appealed to his feelings of humanity, then to his sense of justice but found he had neither, then to his religion, and the command of our Saviour, "to do to others as we would that they should do to us", he replied he could not help that, if every one died as they would be done by, the world would be different from what it now is. With this I left him, thinking farther remonstrance in vain. I committed my case to him who "judgeth righteously", and went forth to seek the friend whom he might raise up to help me in this time of need; such an one, I found, and may God bless the noble-minded man, who stood by us in this trial, not, as he said, out of any particular regard for us but because he always took sides with the weaker oppressed by a stronger, and with those whom he thought in the right.

This friend, by talking of law and public opinion, so frightened the poor man, that he concluded to let us stay, but made it so unpleasant for us and the scholars, that we were glad to leave at the close of the term. The lady professed herself our friend, but has since showed us, that profusion is not always reality. But what is most remarkable, neither the man nor his wife, have been to any of my friends with their tales of slander, they have always chosen to prejudice those ^{but little} ~~very~~ acquainted with me.

Bro. S — remains here, working at a trade he learned while a slave has since lectured in both the Methodist chapels in this place, and in the Town Hall, to general acceptance; and sits in the pew of his employer at church.

All the mischief these persons have instigated against me, and all that occurred last summer and fall, would fill a volume, but one or two examples more must suffice.

Some young men of "property and standing", hearing the story of the two teachers, and suddenly inspired with the true chivalrous spirit of the south, to put down the black man, threatened to assemble a company of like mind with themselves, and mob us, if we attempted to go to slay again; but so it was, that our good friend before mentioned, standing near, heard the whole plan, and when they stopped, gravely informed them, that he went there every Sunday, and also many other gentlemen and ladies, that we had a very interesting school, that he considered it perfectly right for us to go, and would be very happy to see them there, if they came like gentlemen but if any disturbance occurred that individual (pointing out and naming one of the party) should be held responsible for it, whoever did it. This we heard of, and with fear and trembling went as usual the next Sabbath, but all was quiet.